

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 7116

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR PDIP PGOV OVIP BL CI PE
SUBJECT: PROPOSED JOINT MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: A) LA PAZ 6799, B) LIMA 7362

1. I AGREE WITH AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN THAT A MEETING OF
BOLIVIAN, CHILEAN AND PERUVIAN CHIEFS OF STATE IN WASHINGTON
UNDER PRESIDENT CARTER'S AUSPICES WOULD BE MUCH TOO PUBLIC
AND DRAMATIC AN EVENT TO PERMIT PROGRESS ON THE HARD ISSUES
INVOLVED:

-- ARMS TRANSFERS TO THE WEST COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA
(IT IS INACCURATE TO SPEAK OF AN "ARMS RACE" SINCE ECUADOR,
BOLIVIA AND CHILE EITHER BECAUSE OF SIZE, ECONOMIC SITUATION,
OR RESTRICTED ACCESS TO ARMS ARE SIMPLY NOT IN THE RUNNING);

-- THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT WITHIN THE ANDEAN REGION;
AND
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-- A BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR TO THE SEA.

2. CLEARLY PERU IS THE KEY TO A SOLUTION TO THESE THREE
PROBLEMS IN WAYS CONSONANT WITH OUR POLICY INTERESTS:

-- REGARDING ARMS TRANSFERS, PERU HAS BUILT UP FROM

SOVIET AND WESTERN SOURCES AN ARSENAL OF TANKS, PLANES, GUNS AND SHIPS THAT GIVES IT QUANTUM SUPERIORITY OVER ECUADOR, BOLIVIA AND CHILE SINGLY OR IN COMBINATION.

-- WITH RESPECT TO CONFLICT POTENTIAL, THE ONLY LIKELY SCENARIO IS A PERUVIAN INVASION OF CHILE TO REALIZE ITS REVANCHIST DREAMS OF REGAINING "LOST" TERRITORIES. WE MAKE THIS ASSERTION BECAUSE THERE IS NO OTHER POTENTIAL AGGRESSOR: ECUADOR, AND BOLIVIA ARE TOO SMALL AND WEAK TO ATTACK ON ANY FRONTIER. CHILE IS NOT SO SUICIDAL AS TO SEND ITS 40 TANKS AGAINST PERU'S 500 IN THE BORDER AREA; AND BRAZIL IS NOT GOING TO ATTACK WESTWARD ACROSS THE AMAZON JUNGLES AND UP THE ANDEAN ESCARPMENT.

-- AS TO THE BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR, WE KNOW FROM CLANDESTINE SOURCES THAT CHILE IS PREPARED TO GRANT BOLIVIA SUCH A CORRIDOR (CEDING CHILEAN TERRITORY) WITHOUT TERRITORIAL COMPENSATION. PERU HAS NOT BEEN EQUALLY FORTHCOMING AND CONSTITUTES THE PRINCIPAL IMPEDIMENT TO AGREEMENT.

3. THE SYMBOLISM OF A CANAL TREATY FOR THE EVEN MORE LONG-STANDING TERRITORIAL/SOVEREIGNTY PROBLEM OF THE BOLIVIAN OUTLET TO THE SEA IS CLEAR. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OF PRESIDENT CARTER
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(I.E., IN A QUADRIPARTITE MEETING) WOULD OFFER LITTLE PROSPECT OF PROGRESS AND INDEED COULD WELL BACK PERU INTO A CORNER CAUSING THE GOP TO RESIST PROGRESS ON ALL ISSUES. MORE USEFUL IN OUR JUDGMENT WOULD BE PRIVATE BILATERAL PRESSURE AT THE PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO PERU THAT THE USG OPPOSES FURTHER ARMS BUILD-UP IN PERU; THAT WE WOULD OPPOSE ANY TERRITORIAL CHANGES IN THE AREA ACHIEVED OTHER THAN BY PEACEFUL NEGOTIATION; AND THAT THE US HOPES THAT PERU WILL CONTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE TO SOLVING THE PERENNIAL HEMISPHERIC PROBLEM OF A BOLIVIAN OUTLET TO THE SEA.
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